

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 12/18/09 has been entered.

Examiner's Amendment

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Stephanie Wardwell on 1/28/10.

The application has been amended as follows:

In the Claims:

Amend Claim 1: A thickening composition comprising;

xanthan gum particles and a potassium salt,
wherein said xanthan gum particles are coated with said potassium salt, ~~such~~
~~that~~ wherein when said coated xanthan gum particles are subjected to a 30-
second vibration in a 60-mesh JIS standard sieve having an inner diameter of 150
mm at a vibration width of 2 to 3 mm and 3600 counts/min, wherein 20% by
weight or less of the coated xanthan gum particles crushed by vibration ~~that~~ pass
through the sieve ~~are 20% by weight or less~~, and wherein xanthan gum particles
~~without a prior to~~ potassium salt coating have a particle size finer than 60 mesh.

Amend Claim 4: The thickening composition according to claim 1, wherein when the
coated xanthan gum particles are added to ion-exchanged water in an amount of 1 part
by weight based on 99 parts by weight of ion-exchanged water at 20°C, the xanthan
gum is dispersed or dissolved without forming a lumpy mass, to reach 90% or more of a
peak viscosity at 2 minutes after the addition.

Cancel Claim 10.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1-5, 7-9, and 11, renumbered 1-9 respective, are allowed.

2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:
3. **Claims 1-5, 7-9, and 11, renumbered 1-9 respective** are allowable over the prior art of record because the Examiner found neither prior art cited in its entirety, nor based on the prior art, found any motivation to combine any of the said prior art references which teaches xanthan gum particles coated with a potassium salt such that the attachment is made in a manner that, when subjected to a 30-second vibration in a 60-mesh JIS Sieve (Inner Diameter 150 mm, vibration width 2-3 mm, and 3600 counts/min), 20% by weight or less of the coated xanthan gum particles crushed by the vibration pass through the sieve when xanthan gum particles having a particle size finer than 60 mesh prior to coating are used as a starting material.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to ANDREW KRAUSE whose telephone number is (571)270-7094. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:30-5.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Keith Hendricks can be reached on (571)272-1401. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/ANDREW KRAUSE/
Examiner, Art Unit 1794

/KEITH HENDRICKS/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1794